

Written Testimony
Education Committee Public Hearing
February 24, 2016
Regarding Bill # SB 175: "An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Department of Education"

There is no rational explanation to support SB 175.

SB 175 is very difficult to understand. The danger of unintended consequences could easily result if this largely incomprehensible bill were to pass.

LEGISLATORS NEED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY to tell the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) that:

- it will NOT support expensive mandates that unnecessarily impact local school budgets.
- it will NOT support a bill that is simply a backhanded attempt to coerce and punish parents by attacking the local education institutions on which they rely and that they generally trust.
- it will NOT support a bill that removes the flexibility for MBR (Minimum Budget Requirements)

After reading Bill SB 175, it is hard to believe that the purpose is an attempt by the CSDE to coerce superintendents to force parents into having their children take tests that a parent deems inappropriate and/or harmful to their children. The CSDE does this in order to try and meet the 95% participation rate.

Again, SB 175 is very difficult to understand. The danger of unintended consequences could easily result if this largely incomprehensible bill were to pass.

The CT State Department of Education could certainly find a different solution to their "95% test participation rate" dilemma rather than manipulating current laws in order to create a coercive environment designed specifically to punish parents who - in good conscience - choose to protect their children from unproven and unfair tests.

Additionally, embedded in SB 175, is the removal of the flexibility for MBR (Minimum Budget Requirements

Less than a year ago, Education Commissioner Wentzell testified in favor of a bill which provided flexibility for MBR (Minimum Budget Requirements). Now, if more than 5% of parents refuse to have their children take the state SBAC test, SB 175 would take away that flexibility and the control that local boards of education have over their budgets.

What is abundantly clear to many citizens is the great lengths that the current State Department of Education will go to in an effort to force compliance. Rather than seek a more acceptable solution, this government agency has chosen to misuse other laws to unfairly threaten school district leaders into demanding compliance on this "95% participation rate" testing issue. IT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO DO SO. **VOTE an emphatic NO! on SB 175 and please encourage your fellow legislators as well.** PROTECT THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO LET ITS WISHES BE KNOWN IN A PEACEFUL AND RESPONSIBLE WAY.

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